

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 13439 191753Z

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TAGS: EAIR,US,UR

SUBJ: CIVAIR: WORLD AIRWAYS CHARTER FLIGHT PROGRAM

REF: (A) STATE 222222; (B) STATE 212361; (C) STATE 219389;

(D) MOSCOW 12817

1. SUMMARY - WORLD AIRWAYS PARTY HELD SERIES OF MEETINGS WITH SOVIET AVIATION AND TOURISM OFFICIALS FROM SEPTEMBER 16-19 TO DISCUSS WORLD PROPOSAL FOR 20 CHARTER FLIGHTS TO MOSCOW NEXT SUMMER. PARTY EMPHASIZED SOVIET RESPONSE NEEDED BY SEPTEMBER 29 TO FACILITATE PLANNING. MAIN SOVIET ARGUMENT AGAINST PROPOSAL IS THAT US-USSR CHARTER AGREEMENT LAPSES MARCH 31, 1976 AND US-USSR TOURISM PICTURE FOR NEXT YEAR IS CLOUDY DUE TO USG UNWILLINGNESS CONDUCT CIVIL AIR NEGOTIATIONS. WORLD PROPOSAL FORMALLY SUBMITTED BY EMBASSY DIPLOMATIC NOTE SEPTEMBER 17. END SUMMARY.

2. TOM HUGHES, VICE PRESIDENT EUROPE, WORLD AIRWAYS, AND LARRY NOLAN, VICE PRESIDENT INTRAV, MET TWICE, ON SEPTEMBER 16 AND 18, WITH V. SAMORUKHOV, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS DEPARTMENT, MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION, TO OUTLINE WORLD PROPOSAL AND SEEK MCA APPROVAL. DETAILS OF MEETING WERE PROVIDED TO EMBASSY BY HUGHES, WITH WHOM WE WERE IN CLOSE TOUCH

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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 13439 191753Z

IN PLANNING AND COORDINATING VISIT.

3. ACCORDING TO HUGHES, HE EMPHASIZED TO SAMORUKHOV, POTENTIAL EARNINGS, DOLS 1.6 MILLION, FROM PROGRAM AND PROSPECTS FOR EXPANDED FUTURE COOPERATION. HE POINTED OUT PROPOSED STOPOVERS INOSLO AND COPENHAGEN DID NOT INVOLVE PICKING UP LOCAL TRAFFIC AND THEREFORE FLIGHTS WERE SIMPLY THROUGH CARRIAGE OF THIRD FREEDOM PASSENGERS. HUGHES SAID THAT IN A "NON-THREATENING" WAY HE HAD APPRAISED SAMORUKHOV OF CAB POSITION LINKING APPROVAL AEROFLOT OFF-ROUTE CHARTERS WITH SOVIET POSITION ACTION ON WORLD PROGRAM AND HAD POINTED OUT WORLD HAD CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR OTHER CITIES IN CASE USSR REJECTED PROPOSAL. AND HE EMPHAYSIZED WORLD AND INTRAV MUST HAVE ANSWER BY SEPTEMBER 29 TO BEGIN NECESSARY PREPARATIONS.

4. SAMORUKHOV, ACCORDING TO HUGHES, WAS CORDIAL AND BUSINESSLIKE IN MEETINGS. HE APPEARED TO ACCEPT HUGHES' EXPLANATION RE STOPOVERS. KEY PROBLEMS, HOWEVER, FOR SAMORUKHOV ARE US-USSR CHARTER AGREEMENT ENDS MARCH 31, 1976 AND USG UNWILLINGNESS CONDUCT BILATERAL CIVIL AVIATION TALKS WHICH EMPPLICATES WHOLE US-USSR TRAVEL PICTURE FOR NEXT YEAR. SAMORUKHOV NOW FULLY AWARE OF CAB POSITION AND WORLD'S NEED FOR QUICK RESPONSE. SAMORUKHOV USED OPPOURTNITY TO REEMPHASIZE SOVIET OPPOSITION SEPARATE CHARTER AGREEMENT WITH US.

5. HUGHES PARTY ALSO MIET WITH MOSKILENKO, DEPUTY COMMERCIAL MANAGER, AEROFLOT, AND INTOURIST OFFICIALS, G. CHESNYAKOV, CHIEF OF SCANDANAVIAN DEPARTMENT AND M. PERLINA, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, ADMINISTRATION FOR TOURISM. INTOURIST OFFICIALS WERE ENTHUSASTIC AND INVITED HUGHES AND NOLAN TO LUNCH SEPTEMBER 19 TO DISCUSS PRELIMINARY PLANS, WHICH HUGHES REGARDS AS POSITIVE SIGN.

6. EMBASSY ON SEPTEMBER 17 SUBMITTED WORLD PROPOSAL TO MINISTRY OF FOREING AFFAIRS BY DIPLOMATIC NOTE.

7. COMMENT - VISIT APPARENTLY SUCCEDED IN CLARIFYING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 MOSCOW 13439 191753Z

DECISION FACTORS FOR SOVIETS AND CLEARING AIR AFTER RECENT MCA REFUSAL DALY FLIGHT CLEARANCE. HUGHES PLEASED WITH MEETINGS AND BELIEVES COMBINATION OF CAB POSITION RE AEROFLOT CHARTERS PLUS POTENTIAL EARNINGS WILL MAKE REJECTION OF WORLD PROPOSAL DIFFICULT. EMBOFF INTENDS CALL ON SAMORUKHOV NEXT WEEK TO REITERATE USG POSITION ON CHARTERS AND CAB STANCE RE WORLD PROGRAM.

8. EMBASSY BELIEVES, HOWEVER, SOVIETS WILL CONTINUE TO LINK WORLD PROPOSAL TO LARGER BILATERAL CIVIL AVIATION ISSUE PARTICULARLY AS PRESSURE POINT TO GET TALKS STARTED. SOVIETS CAN EITHER APPROVE PROGRAM SUBJECT TO INITIATION OF TALKS OR REJECT PROGRAM ON GROUNDS NO LEGAL BASIS EXISTS FOR SUCH AGREEMENT. EITHER WAY, WORLD PROPOSAL COULD BE USED TO PROMPT US INTO TALKS. EMBASSY WILL THEREFORE APPRECIATE LEARNING DEPARTMENT'S STRATEGY FOR UPCOMING CIVIL AIR TALKS AS PROMISED REFTEL A AND PARTICULARLY CONTINGENCY PLANNING FOR SOVIET REACTION TO WORLD PROPOSAL.
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